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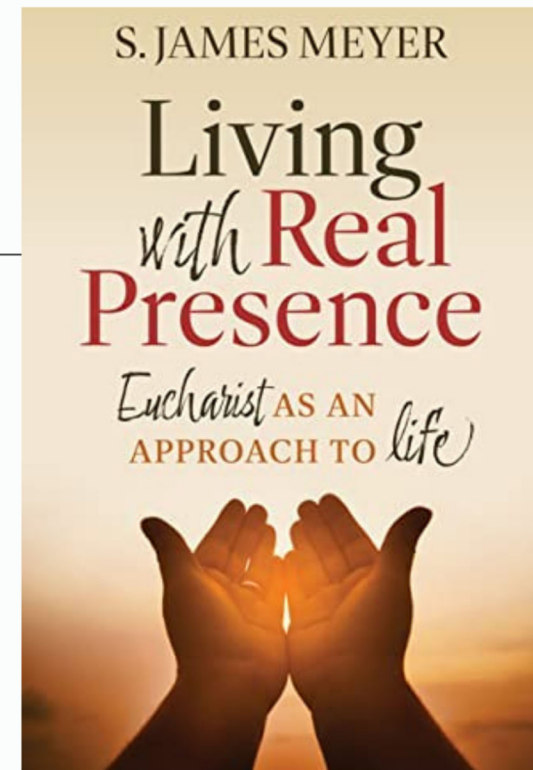
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 **RESURRECTION**
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Journeying to Emmaus with Real Presence



Easter Journal 2023
Resurrection Parish
Green Bay

First Sunday of Easter

April 9, 2023

He Took Bread and Wine

How can we ever fully enter the profound wonder of Eucharist if we don't connect our own lives, our own work and energy, to it? When we look upon the elements on the altar, the bread and wine, do any of us truly see them as the fruits of our labors and the works of our hands? Do we see them as the elements of God's creation transformed by human labor into bread and wine, and now offered back to God to be transformed again into the substance and essence of Christ? Do we see them as the collective gifts of the gathered community being offered up, consecrated, and shared? Do we see them as the circular unity between Creator, creating, and created?

Living with Real Presence: Eucharist As An Approach to Life
S. James Meyer, 23rd Publications

Questions To Ponder:

Have you ever been gifted with a homemade gift? How

What is the work of your human hands that you bring with you to the Eucharist you each day or each week?

How would you sum up the journey you have experienced during this Easter season?

Lectio Divina: Read John 3:16-18

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you continue the journey beyond this season of Easter?

Challenge for the Week: Find a special place in nature this week in which to spend some quiet time. Will you be so inspired as to commit to one new or different way to living in peace and harmony with God's creation, in relationship with God's people? Bring this special connection, this special place, the special commitment you made, to Mass this week.

Second Sunday of Easter

April 16, 2023

He Broke Himself Open

Jesus' words, "Do this in memory of me" present us with a much bigger task than we're often comfortable admitting. He's asking us to break ourselves open as he did, and to be vulnerable as he was. That's hard. Really hard. Pinned against the earth under the weight of stresses and anxieties, we'd rather be self-protective, self-defensive, self-interested, and self-advancing. Break ourselves open? Be vulnerable? No thank you. No wonder we're comfortable reducing Eucharist to an object rather than an action, to a wafer rather than a way of life. It may be safer to stop at merely receiving the Eucharist, but it's so much more enriching and rewarding to receive, become, and share the Eucharist.

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Questions To Ponder:

Recall a moment in your life when you felt the most vulnerable. In hindsight, what growth might you have experienced through this situation?

What do the words "receive, become, and share the Eucharist" mean to you in your life?

Name some things which cause you to struggle with your efforts to love other people, especially those most unlike yourself?

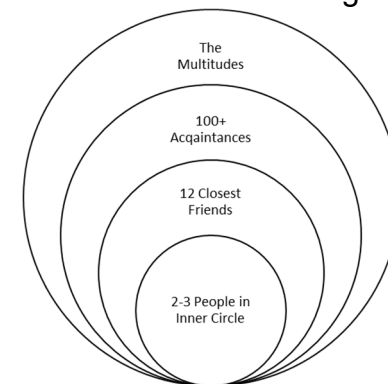
Lectio Divina: Read John 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you continue the journey beyond this season of Easter?

Challenge for the Week: On a piece of paper, create a listing of folks connected to your life as they fall into the following circles of influence. Hold each group in prayer.



Third Sunday of Easter

April 23, 2023

He Poured Himself Out

Most of us have a default tendency to live life from the outside-in. We're preoccupied with how the world, events, and people around us effect our sense of happiness, security, and well-being. It's a self-referential way of being, placing ourselves as the purpose and object of our daily life. We can't even imagine a different way. We then go about the business of trying to orchestrate and manipulate situations, people, and even public policy to conform accordingly, to give ourselves the most favorable experience. When we are unhappy, agitated, or uncomfortable, we automatically start looking for what or who needs to change in the world around us.

That's not how Jesus lived. His energy was outflowing, focused on how he could bring healing, growth, and comfort to others. Rather than being the master of his own life, he became the servant of others. He talked about this quite often and openly.

Do you see the difference—living outside-in versus inside-out? It's really about the directional flow of love and energy in our lives.

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Questions To Ponder:

Describe a time in your life when you felt overwhelmed. Who might have supported you, acted as a source of comfort?

Is there an example from your life in which you really "poured yourself out," helping another person in need?

The statement is made in the book: "the Eucharist makes the ordinary extraordinary." What connections do you make?

Lectio Divina: Read Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you continue your Easter journey?

Challenge for the Week: Jot down some ideas on how you will bring Christ's presence to others this week. Make a list of those who have made Christ's presence real throughout your lifetime and give thanks for their witness.

Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 30, 2023

He Gave Himself To Others

“Giving our lives to and for others is different from giving up our lives. It’s the difference between commitment and surrender. When we commit to marriage and family, we’re not surrendering. We’re not losing ourselves. In fact, it is in this giving that we receive. We become part of and contribute to something so much bigger than we could ever be individually. We become part of and contribute to the body of Christ.

*Offer yourself up, the teacher says. Break yourself open and pour yourself out. Keep your heart centered on the WHY—loving relationship with Creator and creation—and share yourself generously and lovingly with those relationships. This is the way to eternal life. **Do this** in memory of me.*

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Questions To Ponder:

What in your life brings you the most joy?

What do you fear the most in life?

How would you sum up the Why of your life — your ultimate purpose?

In what ways have you given your life over to love, rather than relegating yourself to the dualism of flight or fight? Describe the results.

Lectio Divina: Read John 14:15-21

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him. But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you.

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you continue your Easter journey?

Challenge for the Week: Create a chart of significant events in your life this week. For each encounter or event, what was most shown: fight, flight, or love? Do you see any patterns? Are there any patterns in need of change?

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 7, 2023

Real Presence In Our Relationship With God

We never grow deeper or love more by knowing more. We do so by virtue of our heartfelt, soul-stirring experiences and relationships. This is something the saints and mystics understand intuitively that the rest of us keep struggling to figure out. We can't learn to swim by thinking about it, reading about it, or even praying about it. At some point, we have to jump in the water, splash feverishly, and find ourselves in over our heads. That's just how life works. It's also how love works. And it's exactly what Jesus did.

*As Christ, the very incarnation of God's own self, plunged completely into the full experience of life, so must we, as beings created in God's own image. At some point, we learn to recognize that rolling up our sleeves and plunging both arms into the clay of life, just as God did in our creation story, is a very sacred endeavor. We are not here as consumers of life but as co-creators of life, called to break ourselves open, pour ourselves out, and share ourselves abundantly. Indeed, it really is better to give than to receive. **Do this** in memory of me.*

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Questions To Ponder:

What experiences of life bring God rushing to the forefront of your mind and heart?

What is your brand imprint for God? If you needed to "sell" God to someone, what language or images would you use? How would you include the Eucharist?

In what area of your life do you need to plunge in, get your hands dirty, and create something good for the life of the world? Commit to a plan of action outlined here:

Lectio Divina: Read John 14:1-12

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way."

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you continue your Easter journey?

Challenge for the Week: Create something this week. Anything! Create an object, a new experience, a new relationship; anything is fair game. Then, with this in mind, participate in Eucharist this week celebrating this new expression of life created in love.

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 14, 2023

Real Presence In Our Relationship With Self

We have been taught there are two options when faced with adversity: fight and flight. Do we dig in and fight? Or do we run and hide? The problem with these two options is that both are fueled by self-preservation. When the going gets tough, we typically retreat into self-interest, even when our objectives are noble.

Jesus, in his moment of truth, introduces us to a third option: to love. Certainly, he was tempted to fight—indeed someone brought swords along to the garden on that night. And certainly, he would have been tempted to flee—run away and live to serve another day. But Jesus' thinking was never self-indulgent or self-directed. In the moment of greatest adversity, he chooses to give of his own flesh and blood so that love—not hatred or fear but love—would rule the day.

*Character, Jesus shows us in Eucharist, is revealed in adversity. And the person of Christlike character does not fight or flee. Those of Christlike character choose a third option, a better option—to give their own lives over to love. **Do this** in memory of me.*

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Questions to Ponder:

Recall a stressful time in your life. Review the circumstances. Did you experience more fight or flight in that experience?

Do you experience any ongoing or repeated challenges in your life? How might things change if you reacted with less fighting or fleeing and found new ways to bring more love to the situations?

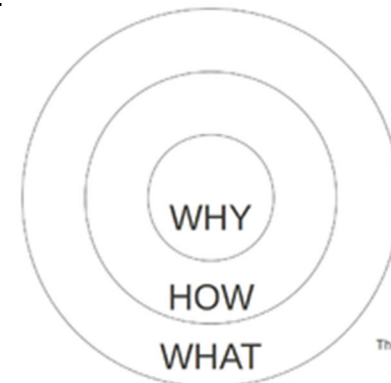
Lectio Divina: Read John 10:1-10

So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you continue your Easter journey?

Challenge for the Week: Take some time this week to take a piece of paper and pen, and draw three circles on your paper. In the inner circle write **why** you exist—describe your purpose. In the middle circle outline **how** you do what you do in living that purpose. Finally, in the outer circle write down **what** you do, the activities you engage in, when living out your purpose, your **Why**, in life.



The 'golden circle' from Simon Sinek

Ascension of the Lord

May 21, 2023

Real Presence In Our Relationship With Others

Eucharist brings us to this sacred and holy place where we dare to live beyond ego, beyond fears, beyond vanity, beyond death. It's where we dare to let others see and touch our brokenness and we love them in theirs. To receive Eucharist takes time. To participate in Eucharist takes openness. But to become Eucharist—to see Christ in others and to be Christ to others—well, that takes courage.

A life of Eucharist—through which we willingly offer the gift of self, break ourselves open, pour ourselves out, and share ourselves with one another—brings an experience of real presence to our relationships. Is this not what we experience in marriage? Parenthood? Meaningful relationships?

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Questions to Ponder:

Who in your life has provided you with a tangible example of The Good Samaritan, doing good for others—especially without any expectation of a reward or recognition?

How have you been Christ to another person? How has another person been Christ to you?

What are some tangible ways in which you can begin to live your life more from the inside-out than from the outside-in?

Lectio Divina: Read Luke 24:13-35

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you continue your Easter journey?

Challenge for the Week: Commit to a tangible way this week to pour yourself out, to help someone in need. Take note during this time what it feels like to live from the inside-out rather than the outside-in. Bring this moment to the Eucharist this week and give thanks to God for such opportunities.

Pentecost Sunday

May 28, 2023

Real Presence In Our Relationship With Society

As we live more deeply in real presence, our spirituality ripples into an ever-widening holy communion with all God's people. At a relatively rudimentary level, we see only our individual relationship with God. We acknowledge that other people also have relationships with God, but we don't connect them with our own. At this level, we say things like, "I'm just here to get my Eucharist" because that's how we see and understand. Life's still mostly about us, and the flow of love's energy in our life is outside-in. Eucharist, the Body of Christ, is seen as a life-giving object we receive. This is the level at which we understand when we're in second grade and we make our first Communion.

As we grow deeper in spirituality, we realize it's not all about us. Living in loving relationship with society, with community—that might be the hardest part of being Christian. In this regard, Eucharist is a tremendous gift. But we have to enter into it fully. I mean really enter into it, not just scrape over the surface and think we're somehow righteous because we go to Mass once a week and hang a rosary from the mirror in the car.

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Questions to Ponder:

Identify a gift which your parents passed on to you. How has this characteristic, this value, or this way of thinking or acting been a positive influence throughout your life?

What are some of the similarities that you share with people in your inner circles? What are some of the differences? What supports your relationships in spite of such differences?

What steps can you take to be more fully present to your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors?

Lectio Divina: Read John 20:19-31

Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you continue your Easter journey?

Challenge for the Week: Make a list of the times in which you felt vulnerable this week. Place this list in your pocket as you go to church on Sunday as a visible sign of your brokenness before God and the need for healing, mercy, and nourishment.

Trinity Sunday

June 4, 2023

Real Presence In Our Relationship With Creation

Peace be with you, Jesus said when he entered the upper room. Peace be with you we say before sharing Eucharist. The peace of real presence—this is where we find our holy communion, our sacred unity with God, neighbor, and all creation now and forever.

When we are able to live in communion with God, with self, with others, with society, and ultimately with all of creation, we are able to live in peace, harmony, and love. The gift of Eucharist opens our eyes and our hearts to this reality, not only as a future heaven, but as the real presence on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus, of course, understood this. He also understood that this holy communion is not something we can know intellectually, it is something we are blessed to engage experientially.

Do this in memory of me.

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Questions to Ponder:

Where is a place in nature that you most experience a sense of the holy, of God? Describe why:

What do you do, or where do you go, when you need to seek peace and harmony with yourself, with others, with creation and with God?

How can you engage deeper thinking so as to see the Communion wafer used at Mass as real bread, which is the Body of Christ? The word used to describe this is transubstantiation.

Lectio Divina: Read John 20:1-9

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

What word or phrase from this Scripture passage most resonates with you?

How will this reading shape your life this week as you begin your Easter journey?

Challenge for the Week: Intentionally bring a gift to the Eucharist this week for offertory. Yes, some money perhaps, but also the thoughts and memories of how you have used your God-given gifts, talents, and time for a family member, friend, neighbor, or co-worker.